



FORM BEST PRACTICES CONTEST 2023

Municipality: Echt-Susteren
Country: The Netherlands
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Name project

Sport and leisure park In de Bandert





Category Certification Criteria: mark the category of your project

- Energy and environmental policies (politiche energetiche e ambientali);
- Infrastructure policies (politiche infrastrutturali);
- Quality of urban life policies (politiche per la qualita' urbana);
- Agricultural, touristic and artisan policies (politiche agricole, turistiche, artigianali);
- Policies for hospitality, awareness and training (politiche per l'ospitalita, la consapevolezza e la formazione);
- Social cohesion (coesione sociale).**

Summary project

Cittaslow comes to life at leisure park In de Bandert

Leisure park In de Bandert in the Dutch municipality of Echt-Susteren is a family park covering more than 60 hectares with plenty of room for sports, relaxation, and recreation. The focus – quality of life – is reflected in everything, from the sustainable construction and the rural, green setting to the wide range of sport and leisure activities on offer. Caring for and supporting one another is also an important theme. In short, leisure park In de Bandert is a stunning example of a place where the Cittaslow values come to life.

Goal project

Connecting through sport and exercise

Echt-Susteren wants to encourage all residents to stay active, social, and healthy by making sport and exercise accessible to everyone. Leisure park In de Bandert offers residents the perfect combination of sport, relaxation, and recreation in a green and sustainable setting. Sport and exercise keep people healthy, foster strong social bonds, and boost quality of life on all fronts.

Result project

In de Bandert has a diverse range of sports, recreation, and relaxation options on offer. From a gym and a climbing course to a covered swimming pool, a bowling alley, an indoor playground, and a large event venue for hosting local parties brimming with traditions. And there's more. The park also offers youth, elderly care, and refugee facilities. The new leisure park, which is still being developed, will welcome groups from all walks of life to exercise, relax, and enjoy life together. The park has been designed in such a way that all residents, including those with a disability or additional needs, feel welcome and seen. Leisure park In de Bandert therefore sets an excellent example for an inclusive society.



Sport

In de Bandert offers a wide range of sports facilities, including a covered swimming pool, a sports hall, a tennis court, a gymnastics hall, football pitches, an indoor archery centre, a boules court, a skate park, a football cage, and a gym.

The outstanding facilities in the leisure park will also attract talented athletes. The stunning 420-metre-long indoor kart track was made famous by F1 driver Max Verstappen, who started his racing career in Echt. The archery range with sixteen automatic lanes also attracts the best archers in the country. It boasts Olympic-length distances of up to 90 metres. The regional training centre for judokas and gymnasts is also located in the park, where talented athletes train for national and international championships and even the Olympics.



Common room for people with dementia and their caregivers

The leisure park has something for everyone, from elite athletes to people looking to exercise or relax in their own way and according to their own abilities. This includes older people with specific care needs. The park has a common room for people in the early stages of dementia. Here, they can participate in regular games, fun activities, and newspaper readings. The common room is a warm and welcoming facility that gives carers the attention they deserve by offering them a brief reprieve from their caretaking duties. While their partners participate in a fun activity, they can enjoy some much-deserved alone time, such as taking a relaxing dip in the adjacent swimming pool.



Group accommodation

At the edge of the leisure park is a new and sustainable group accommodation for up to 60 people. This location is ideal for sports groups, youth groups, care groups and schools and currently serves as a temporary shelter for Ukrainian refugees. The park wants to provide a safe haven for those fleeing unimaginable circumstances. Guests have access to all facilities in the hopes of providing a welcome distraction in such a difficult time.

Social cohesion

With its diverse range of activities and facilities, the park plays an important role in fostering social cohesion. The open and accessible nature as well as the diverse amenities contribute to the quality of the living environment on a social, emotional, and physical level. Residents were actively involved in the development of the park. For example, young people who were once considered a nuisance helped to design the outdoor skate track and now skate there often and serve as the park's ambassadors.



**Quality of life**

The leisure park is home to several sports associations, which has many advantages. An important yet overlooked benefit is that it increases quality of life in the small centres. Parking was often a problem in these centres, but now that they've been housed together in the leisure park, this is no longer an issue. Parking is extremely well organized and completely free.

Sustainability

Sustainability was a top priority during the design and creation of the park. Many of the buildings are equipped with solar panels and advanced technical installations for sustainable energy use. This has resulted in a 90% decrease in gas consumption. Solar panels and a heat pump generate electricity for several adjacent buildings. The football pitches and tennis courts all have LED lighting.

Green

The leisure park is beautifully situated in a lush, green area and was developed with respect for current and future biodiversity. Green structures were used and re-used when designing the public outdoor space, traffic was restricted in the area, and swales were created to help to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Finance (costs and benefits)

Municipal investments: €13,300,000

Investments by organisations and associations (upon request): €3,035,000

Input in hours volunteers (upon request): 8,150

Staff (staff involved and use of time)

- Municipality of Echt-Susteren
- Stichting Menswel (local wellness institute)
- Sports and socio-cultural associations
- Businesses
- Childcare centre
- Education
- Refugee centre



Additional information (if necessary)

Film introducing the park: [Leisurepark In de Bandert - YouTube](#)

Link: [Familiepark In de Bandert - Het Smalste Stukje Nederland](#)

Park map:



Once filled in this form please send it to: info@cittaslow.net

- Participation Deadline, 15 May 2023 -